



NEWS RELEASE

July 16, 2010

U.S. AMBASSADOR'S FIRST VISIT TO BAGUIO AREA HIGHLIGHTS PHILIPPINE – U.S. PARTNERSHIP

U.S. Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr. celebrated over 100 years of friendship and highlighted Philippine – U.S. partnership during his first visit to Baguio on July 15 and 16.

Highlights of Ambassador Thomas's visit included hosting the celebration of U.S. Independence Day, which also commemorates Philippine-American Friendship Day, at his historic Baguio residence. In his remarks, citing the recent inauguration of a new president and vice president, Ambassador Thomas said "we were all inspired by the energy, the enthusiasm, and the hope that surrounded the inauguration. Great things are possible, but hard work lies ahead. The United States, and all of us in the American Embassy, stand ready as friends to help you make that vision a reality, and make the Philippines a better place for all citizens." Ambassador Thomas also toasted the over 100 years of friendship United States has enjoyed with the city of Baguio and its citizens.

At the Philippine Military Academy, Ambassador Thomas was accorded honors upon arrival. He also paid a courtesy call on PMA Superintendent Vice Admiral Leonardo C. Calderon Jr. Ambassador Thomas noted that the "great partnership and historical legacies link our two militaries."

In La Union, Ambassador Thomas and top government officials in the area led the ground breaking ceremony for the water and septage treatment plant in Barangay Dallangayan Oeste in San Fernando City. The 5.8 million-peso waste treatment facility, funded by USAID, Rotary International Water Alliance and the city government of San Fernando, is expected to be completed by June 2011. This public-private partnership will improve water and sanitation services and increase capacity of local governments to address sanitation challenges.

To emphasize the importance of combating human trafficking, Ambassador Thomas engaged in a round table discussion with local government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Officials discussed their ongoing and future anti-trafficking plans for the Cordillera Administrative Region.

During his two day visit to Baguio, Ambassador Thomas visited a Department of Social Welfare and Development Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth, which has a Peace Corps Volunteer on its staff. He also toured the facilities of two American multinational companies -- Moog, Inc. and Texas Instruments -- to understand their contributions to economic development in the Baguio area.

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